

**Amendments To The Claims:**

*This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:*

Claims 1-11: (Canceled)

12. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a coated stainless steel strip product, said method comprising

in a continuous roll-to-roll process

etching a surface of a stainless steel strip with ion-assisted etching to remove oxides from said surface, said etching taking place in an etch chamber; and

depositing at least one a-layer of at least one metal to a thickness of about 0.05 to about 15  $\mu$ m on said surface using an electron beam evaporation process, said depositing taking place in at least one electron beam evaporation chamber;

wherein

the strip has a thickness of between 0.015 mm and 3.0 mm;

the at least one layer is deposited to a thickness that is max 10% of the strip thickness, with a tolerance of +/- 30% of the thickness that is max 10% of the strip thickness;

said at least one layer of at least one metal on said surface consists essentially of one or several of the metals gold, copper, nickel, molybdenum cobalt, silver, tin, or tungsten; and

the stainless still strip has a Cr content of at least 10%.

13. (Canceled)

14. (Canceled)

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (New) The method according to claim 12, wherein the stainless steel strip comprises austenitic stainless steel, duplex stainless steel, hardenable martensitic chromium steel, precipitation hardenable stainless steel, or maraging steel with a minimum tensile strength of 1000 MPa in the cold rolled or heat treated condition.

18. (New) The method according to claim 12 wherein said at least one electron beam evaporation chamber comprises 10 electron beam evaporation chambers.

19. (New) The method according to claim 18 wherein said at least one layer comprises 10 layers.

20. (New) The method according to claim 12 wherein the thickness that is max 10% of the strip thickness is between 0.05 to 15  $\mu\text{m}$ .

21. (New) The method according to claim 20 wherein the thickness that is max 10% of the strip thickness is between 0.05 to 11  $\mu\text{m}$ .

22. (New) The method according to claim 21 wherein the thickness that is max 10% of the strip thickness is between 0.05 to 5  $\mu\text{m}$ .

23. (New) The method according to claim 12 wherein the at least one layer of at least one metal deposited on said surface comprises multiple individual layers of different metallic coatings selected from the group consisting of Ag, Ni, Mo, Co, Au, Mo, W, and Sn.